

CLICK!

Ten tips for photographing your children

All parents take photographs of their children and treasure them all; except perhaps the ones that just didn't turn out very well! But wouldn't you like to know how to take beautiful portraits instead of just so-so snapshots? Professional photographer, **Natalie Carstens**, shares the secrets to taking great photographs of your children. Here are some helpful tips to remember next time you take out the camera.

1

Practise focusing

Eyes connect the viewer to the image. So, focus on your child's eyes, lock the focus (usually by half-pressing the shutter), recompose the image if you need to, then slowly press the shutter button to prevent camera shake. Children are rarely still, so getting the focus right takes practice, but practice makes perfect.

2

Get closer and fill the frame

Don't be afraid to cut off the top of your child's head, it makes the photograph more intimate and draws attention to the eyes. Move closer with your feet or zoom in with your lens. This eliminates background clutter and other distractions.

3

Photograph in soft light

Learn to see the best light; you want to have soft shadows in your portraits. Soft shadows allow children to widen their eyes. If you are outside, avoid the harsh midday sun and look for open shade – under trees or near a building. The light on an overcast day is perfect for portraits; get in close and avoid including the sky. When photographing your children indoors, north-facing windows give a bright, indirect light that works like an overcast sky.



4

Turn the flash off

A built-in camera flash is great for snapshots but not so good for portraits. Instead, opt for open shade or window light and turn the flash off.



8

Follow your child

Be ready for action by watching your child through the viewfinder. With a little patience, when you follow them you'll be ready to capture that perfect moment.

9

Get everyone closer together

When photographing multiple children together, ask them to put their arms around each other, hold hands or touch their heads together.

10

Keep pressing the shutter button

Luck can play a big role in successful portraits. Keep taking photographs, with practice you'll get luckier and increase the odds of getting that one beautiful portrait. With digital cameras, there's no excuse not to take more photographs.

DO YOU KNOW A HERO?

The Littlest Heroes Project is a non-profit organisation made up of professional photographers worldwide. The project is an effort to open the eyes of the world to a part of it that so many ignore or pretend (or don't even realise) exists. The idea is to capture some special memories for families that are dealing with hectic schedules due to their child's battle with disease and sickness. Our photographers provide our "littlest heroes" with a complimentary photo session and a selection of photos. The whole family (brothers, sisters and brave parents) are welcome to participate in the session as well. This is a wonderful gift for these families.

If you have a child, or know of a child, who suffers from any type of serious illness or life-altering disability, please visit the Littlest Heroes Project website at www.littlestheroesproject.org for more information, or to apply for a photo session.



5

Be creative with your composition

Instead of placing your child in the middle of the photograph, place him off to one side. When photographing outdoors, watch out for trees or buildings growing out of his head; sometimes you need to step a little to one side. Add a little variety to your photographs by changing the orientation of your camera to shoot in portrait as well as landscape format.

6

Change your perspective

Get down low and photograph your children at their eye-level. For babies and infants, you might even want to lie on the floor!

7

Capture different expressions

Children have fascinating expressions; they can be serious and thoughtful. Try to capture these expressions. Make it fun for your children by giving them something to do - a book or a toy. Conversation is another good way to capture your child's different expressions. Ask younger children to tell you a story.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Natalie Carstens of Tigs Creations Photography specialises in pregnancy, newborn, children and family portraiture. Her style is modern and fresh; with each portrait she aims to capture the real essence of her subjects in a fun and relaxed way. For more information and to view additional photographs, visit her website and follow her blog at www.tigscreations.com.

